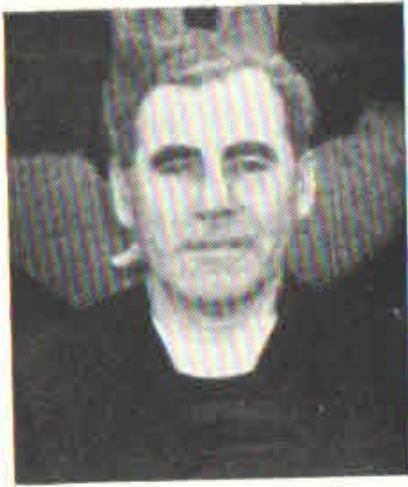


20 March

Fr KEVIN LENAGHAN

30 January 1900 – 20 March 1952



Kevin Lenaghan was born in Port Elizabeth and educated by the Marists at Uitenhage. He worked for two years with the railways before joining the Society in 1919. He was noted from the beginning as one who was ‘consistently cheerful’. Ordained at Milltown Park, Dublin, he returned to South Africa in 1933 and taught at St Aidan’s. He was drawn to Afrikaans and asked to specialise in the language at Stellenbosch University, believing there was a great need to break down the prejudice against Catholics in

the Afrikaans speaking community.

The war intervened and, as a chaplain, he found himself with South African soldiers in North Africa and Italy. The Commanding Officer of the regiment to which he was attached had no time for Catholics and especially priests and banged the table in protest when Kevin went to his office. Kevin’s response was to also bang the table and not be intimidated. The CO stopped for a moment and said, ‘So you are one of those people who think?’ It was the beginning of a firm friendship.

After the war, Kevin endured poor health but he returned to St Aidan’s with a fund of stories. In 1947 he was involved in the setting up of Kolbe House, the Catholic chaplaincy for Cape Town University, and was still writing begging letters and phoning from his bed, to which he was confined as his condition deteriorated.

Among the tributes at the time of his death was one from a soldier who had served with him and whose enduring memory of Kevin was of a man ‘with his eyes on the crest of the next hill.’